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ABSTRACT

The urgent need to correct inequities and shortsighted rural justice practices, i.e., juvenile delinquency problems, makes it crucial that available resources be used wisely and that careful choices be made among the viable alternatives. Twelve basic economic concepts can be helpful in providing a framework or diagnostic perspective that can be utilized by legislators, administrators, advisory board members, advocacy groups, program workers or volunteers, and professional analysts when planning actions and weighing alternatives related to the area of rural justice. The concepts include diminishing added returns, opportunity cost, complementary relationships, input substitution, size economies, locational considerations, comparative advantage, fixed variable costs, direct and indirect effects, the time value of costs and benefits, risk considerations, and efficiency vs. equity and freedom. After applying appropriate concepts, key decisions should be made by: pinpointing the problem or the direction in which to move; diagnosing the reasons why the problem persists or why more progress is not being made; identifying the viable alternatives for alleviating the situation and predicting the likely results of each; and after weighing the alternatives, deciding what to do, using appropriate criteria. The underlying task environment and how it affects ideologies, values, ethics, and concepts of justic must also be considered in the decision making process. (NEC)

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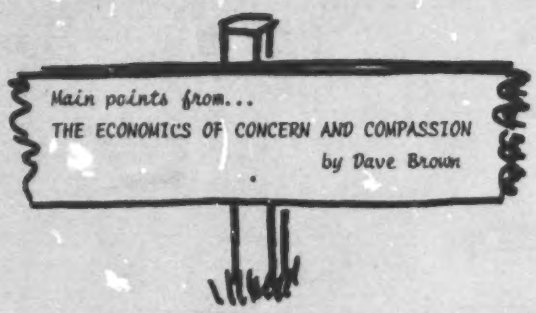

ECONOMICS: the study of the behavior of man and his institutions as they relate to the allocation of scarce resources.

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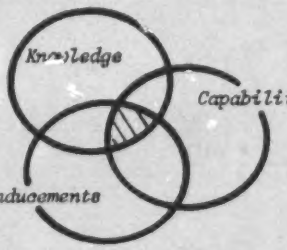
THE MAIN THEME - The very urgency of the need to correct inequities and to prevent shortsighted or harmful practices makes it crucial that change-agents husband their time, talents, and funds wisely! Tough choices have to be made among the viable action alternatives. In making these decisions, concepts and techniques from economics and related fields can be helpful.

KEY DECISIONS

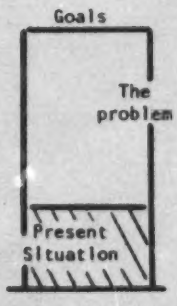
* What overall strategy?
* What specific actions?
* How big?
* How to go about it?
* Whom to involve?
* When to start?
* Where to begin?
* Whom to help most?
* How fast to proceed?
* When to let go?

People or organizations won't change unless they have...



SOME HELPFUL CONCEPTS

1. Diminishing added returns
2. Opportunity cost
3. Complementary relationships
4. Input substitution
5. Size economies
6. Locational economics
7. Comparative advantage
8. Fixed & variable costs
9. Direct & indirect effects
10. Time value of costs & benefits
11. Risk considerations
12. Efficiency vs. equity & freedom



A. IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM → B. DIAGNOSE THE CAUSES & OBSTACLES → C. PINPOINT THE VIABLE OPTIONS & PREDICT THEIR LIKELY OUTCOMES → D. DECIDE WHAT TO DO

The Task Environment

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EXTERNALITIES

COMMON DECISION MODELS...

* Maximize a single objective
* Minimize costs
* Weigh the trade-offs
* Minimize risk of failure
* Gaming
* Satisficing

IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO...

1. *Does it really get at the problem, & is it workable?*
2. *Will it have the purported effects?*
3. *Is it the best way?*

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THE ECONOMICS OF CONCERN AND COMPASSION: APPLICATIONS TO RURAL JUSTICE*

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Let me start by telling what this presentation is not about! It is not going to barrage you with all sorts of facts and figures. Nor does it seek to impose a dollar value on human life, personal dignity, or other intangibles that are so important in rural justice. Nor will this be an attempt to impress professional peers with manipulations of mathematics, supply-and-demand curves, and such that economists love to flourish.

What my presentation does seek to do is suggest a framework -- an orderly way of thinking...a diagnostic perspective -- that can be useful when planning actions and weighing alternatives related to the area of rural justice.

Healthy doses of dedicated fervor and pressure to move ahead quickly are indeed essential if headway is to be made. But these energies can be wasted if not carefully husbanded. Everything can't be done at once. Helping one group may have to be at the expense of neglecting others. Tough decisions have to be made about how to use scarce funds, time, and talents. Priorities have to be set. Efficient approaches need to be sorted out from the inefficient. Whether the concern is with a multi-million dollar national program or simply using one's own time wisely at the local level, there are usually many options when it comes to deciding what to do, how to go about it, where to start first, how fast to proceed, whom to involve, and when to let go. The very urgency of the need to correct inequities and shortsighted practices makes it crucial that available resources be used wisely and that careful choices be made among the viable alternatives.

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*Presented and discussed at the National Symposium on Rural Justice, Knoxville, Tennessee, June 22, 1979

I. An Example -- Alternatives for Dealing with Rural Juvenile Delinquency Problems

Let me illustrate with some of the decision-making issues associated with rural juvenile delinquency problems. (You may want to be thinking about analogs in other areas of concern as we proceed.)

Recently we completed a study of local delinquency problems, programs, and felt-needs in the 15-county area surrounding Knoxville.[1] This area has several towns and cities with healthy economic growth and convenient access to social services. But it also includes a goodly number of small communities in outlying rural settings where county tax bases are small, outlets for youths limited, and professional help scarce. Delinquency problems have been on the increase. Many places in this East Tennessee area have not had specialized facilities or personnel for dealing with delinquency, status offenses, and other youth problems. Though most local officials wish it could be otherwise, youth in nonmetropolitan settings of East Tennessee have often been handled in adult-like manner or sent off to institutions elsewhere in the State.

We asked 51 persons concerned at least part-time with rural juvenile problems at local or area levels (judges, law enforcement personnel, personal counselors, and school officials) to indicate the kinds of local services deserving special attention or improvement in the future. Their responses highlighted: professional counseling referral services; juvenile probation services; detention facilities especially designed for youth; recreational facilities and programs; training for local officials and volunteers concerned with juvenile problems; use of group homes and halfway houses; foster care programs; help to youth in getting jobs; and specialized juvenile courts with adequate support staff.

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[1] For a report of this study, see William Dan Bolton and David W. Brown, Rural Juvenile Delinquency: Problems & Needs in East Tennessee, Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 580, June 1978.

Think, if you will, about some of the issues and alternatives faced by a rural community or county with a small population and income base if it is to use its limited resources effectively toward the improvement of such juvenile services. Questions like the following need to be addressed:

** At the broad strategy level, should emphasis be on 1) prevention of delinquency problems, or 2) improved local law enforcement and adjudication processes, or 3) better treatment and rehabilitation services for youth and families who have problems?

** Within any one of these three categories, what specific facilities, services, or programs should receive priority?

** Are there ways to combine certain services in the locality (e.g., adult and youth counseling, or cooperation with the school system) so that there will be cost savings or better results?

** Can there be cost savings or better results by pooling efforts with neighboring counties, or by cooperating with area-wide undertakings, or by using specialized services in nearby urban centers? (Often, having local youth services is more convenient and personalized, but it is expensive.)

** How far should the locality go in making use of help from state and federal sources? (Such programs offer access to funds, facilities, and specialized professionals that individual rural places could never provide on their own. But participation may be at the cost of burdensome compliance and matching-fund requirements.)

** In dealing with local delinquency problems, are there ways to draw upon "free" help from volunteers, churches, civic groups, etc.? (Such involvement could also be a way to rekindle the spirit of neighborliness and mutual caring that historically has been an important part of rural living but that is in danger of disappearing.)

Similarly, people at district, state, and federal levels face many issues related to the alleviation of juvenile problems in rural areas. For example:

** What basis to use for deciding how to divide program funds among various places? Seriousness of the problem? Scarcity of local resources? Local capability and enthusiasm? Effects on future political support for the program? Or what?

** Should emphasis be on immediate impacts, or on lasting long-term results?

** Should emphasis be on comprehensive services and facilities in major towns and cities? Or on decentralization and ready access by people in outlying places?

** In trying to upgrade juvenile services, to what extent should there be emphasis on the "carrot" approach (leadership education, cost-sharing, voluntary participation) as distinct from the "stick" approach (insistence that all places meet certain standards or follow certain procedures).

Public officials and agency personnel aren't the only ones who face tough decisions. Groups seeking to influence legislation and public opinion related to juvenile problems face some tough decisions too about how best to channel their lobbying and educational efforts:

** Where to concentrate efforts? At grassroots constituency levels? In state and national legislative circuits? Via participation in agency advisory boards? Or what?

** How best to reach the intended audience? Group meetings, one-on-one sessions with key influentials, mass media, or what?

** How much change to press for at any one time?

** When to make the big educational or lobbying push? And for how long to continue the campaign?

II. Concepts from Economics Can Be Helpful

The examples that I've given stem from juvenile delinquency concerns. But many similar choices crop up when tackling other rural justice needs. In coming to grips with such issues -- whether they be broad policy questions or the nitty-gritty decisions of the individual program worker or volunteer -- there are several concepts from the field of economics that can be helpful in organizing one's thinking.

Many basic texts in economics would lead one to believe that it's a field that deals with little else than big business, profits, controlling inflation, trade, price forecasting, and things like that. But its conceptual underpinnings carry vastly broader implications. In fact, it was concern about poverty and human injustices that led many of the early thinkers in economics to develop their theories. The following definition of economics sums it up nicely:

> Economics is the study of the behavior of man and his institutions as they relate to the allocation of scarce resources.[2]

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[2]This definition was used by Professor Dale Dahl of the University of Minnesota in a paper given at the Economic Research Conference on U.S. Food System Regulation, Airlie House, Virginia, April 17, 1979.

Economics has a long way to go in fulfilling this defined task but, as many persons who deal with rural justice will testify, the focus on how to use scarce resources effectively is certainly a relevant one, and the need to take into account the realities of human concerns, responses, and institution is indeed important.

Let's dust off the cobwebs from some basic economic decision concepts, and think for a moment how they can be applied to rural justice concerns:

1. Diminishing added returns -- the frequent reality that, while some resources to intensify or upgrade an undertaking may have a high payoff, there will be a point beyond which added inputs will do little to help performance further. This applies to human services programs and voluntary efforts just as much as it does to factory and farm production. For example, a few group homes may do a lot of good, but a point of oversaturation can be reached.

2. Opportunity cost -- the need, when investing time and funds in one undertaking, to consider what is being given up by not using those resources in other ways. Tying up local funds in law enforcement equipment may mean less for human services personnel training. Establishing a new state institution for delinquent youths is likely to be at the expense of forgoing alternative living facilities and counseling services back home where the kids run into problems. And so on.

3. Complementary relationships. There may be ways to combine or coordinate two or more undertakings so that each one helps the other. Sometimes one plus one can equal three! For example, good cooperation between counselors in the juvenile court system and the local schools can do much to enhance one another's effectiveness.

4. Input substitution -- the reality that there may be more than one way to provide a given set of services and that cost-effectiveness may be an important consideration. For example, a locality might compare the costs of a) running its own mental health clinic vs. b) paying a private clinic to help needy cases as required. Also relevant here is the need for flexibility to allow agencies to move ahead in the best way they know how. How often have you witnessed the case where there was some slack funding in the overall budget, but where a freeze on travel prevented staff from getting out to visit local offices or from participating in useful training activities?

5. Size economies. It's not always true but for many services and facilities there can be significant cost savings by running one large operation instead of several little ones. In sparsely populated rural counties, there may be too few cases to run, say, a comprehensive mental health center or a juvenile court facility very effectively; there may be worthwhile economies of size by pooling efforts with nearby counties. At the same time, it is possible to over-centralize. Relying on one large facility or service network can result in added administrative layers and travel expenses that more than offset the gains.

6. Locational considerations. Where should the institutions aimed at helping rural people be placed? "Location theory" and other insights from the field of regional economics tell us that, from an efficiency viewpoint, few services would be based in small rural towns and villages; comprehensive facilities and agency headquarters serving a region would be in major centers like Knoxville, and branch offices or facilities would be in middle-sized towns or cities. From the viewpoint of politics and local access to jobs, there may be justification for spreading some major installations around a bit, rather

than concentrating all in the same center. But where there is a proposal to establish, say, a regional prison or specialized medical facility in a small hamlet way off the beaten track, it behooves one to take a close look at how the remote location and separation from companion services will affect results. Also, careful consideration has to be given to administrative boundaries; it may or may not make sense, when establishing new programs, to follow traditional county or agency district lines.

7. Comparative advantage. Applied to rural justice undertakings, this concept from economics calls attention to the need to make effective use of training and experience. Often we see social workers and law enforcement personnel bogged down in routine paper work that clerical staff could handle. Likewise, it increasingly appears that the skills of doctors, dentists, and lawyers -- so scarce in many rural areas -- could be used to much fuller advantage if there were more encouragement of semi-professionals.

8. Fixed and variable costs. When initiating or expanding a rural justice undertaking, it's the added (out of pocket) costs that count. The accounting practice of prorating all costs may not be appropriate when making such decisions. For example, attaching a legal counselor to senior citizens center may require funds for salary, a desk, and some travel, but no additional funds for office space or secretarial help are likely to be needed if use can be made of excess space and secretarial time available at the center. However, it works the other way too; when considering elimination of a service, only those cost items that would change as a result would enter the decision.

9. Direct and indirect effects. Rural justice undertakings may have important "multiplier" or "ripple" effects that ought to be taken into account. A new mental health clinic, if successful, may serve as a demonstration that

stimulates groups in other rural places to organize similar clinics. There may be important intangible spinoffs, whereby such undertakings inspire a fresh spirit of hope, cooperation, and endeavor that sparks other important improvements in the community.

10. The time value of costs and benefits. Some kinds of rural services (for example, adding more sheriff patrols to curb vandalism) have relatively quick effects but may not get at the heart of a problem. Alternative approaches (for example, better recreational and vocational outlets for rural youth) may have more lasting impacts but have high "front end" costs and require some time before results are seen. Other things equal, people (politicians especially?) will tend to prefer the option that has the quickest payoff. The longer they have to wait, the more they tend to "discount" those future results. To be induced to choose a slow-payoff alternative, decisionmakers will often have to be convinced to take a long-run view of things and be shown that the overall effects are considerably greater than with the quick-payoff alternative.

11. Risk considerations. Given two options -- a risky approach and a sure bet -- most people would choose the sure bet if the most likely outcomes are about the same. If a risky line of action is being proposed, one may have to show that a) really spectacular results could be achieved, b) the consequences won't be too bad or irreversible if things go wrong, and/or c) there are ways to reduce the odds of bad results (such as trying an innovative program out on a pilot basis at first).

12. Efficiency vs. equity and freedom. Much of the preoccupation of economists is with efficiency -- either a) achieving as much as possible with a given set of resources or b) getting something done for the least cost. And being efficient is a vital consideration if headway is to be made in conserving

the rural environment, protecting the rights of disadvantaged rural people, opening up new opportunities to improve life quality, and reaching various other goals in mind at this symposium. But being efficient sometimes comes at the expense of neglecting certain needy groups, or of moving ahead without involving those affected in decisions, or of imposing stiff requirements for compliance without much opportunity for recourse. These two issues -- how much freedom to sacrifice, and how much inequity to tolerate -- are at the heart of much of the debate related to rural justice needs and solutions. Economics can't supply the answers (that gets into value judgments and the consensus-building process), but it can at least call attention to trade-offs between efficiency and equity or freedom concerns.

III. Putting Things Together in a Problem-Solving Framework

One or more of the economic concepts that I've just mentioned will usually enter the picture when dealing with a specific rural justice issue or program. But as a point of departure in coming to grips with key decisions, a more cohesive framework is needed. You may prefer a different clustering, but many people find it useful to approach things in something like the following manner:

Step A. Pinpoint the problem that you're trying to solve, or the direction in which you want to move.

Step B. Diagnose the reasons why the problem persists, or why more progress isn't being made.

Step C. Identify the viable alternatives for alleviating the situation and predict the likely results of each.

Step D. Weigh the alternatives, and decide what to do, using appropriate criteria.

And underlying all four of these steps is the need to take into account the "task environment" -- relevant elements of the geographical, historical, cultural, technological, political, institutional, and ideological setting in which the actions being considered are to take place.

This sort of framework can be useful whether the decision at hand is large or small, and whether the accompanying analysis is complex or simple. Let me elaborate just a bit:

Step A, pinpointing the problem or need. While broad rhetoric has its place in generating public concern, there comes the time when an undertaking has to be defined more sharply and trimmed down to manageable size. Which specific rural health problems are you going to tackle first? And where? When you talk about "juvenile problems," do you have in mind delinquents, status offenders, the abused and neglected, or whom?

A problem doesn't exist unless there is a gap between 1) the existing situation and 2) some aspired goal. But it isn't always easy to pin down these goals, especially where intangibles like individual rights, community spirit, and environmental aesthetics are involved.

Sometimes means and ends become confused, or hard to distinguish. For example, having the right to work beyond 65 may in itself be a source of satisfaction to older people, and not just a way to augment income or keep busy. Heated opposition to a court reform proposal may make winning that particular battle the main preoccupation, at the expense of losing sight of a broader objective of more equity in the legal system.

Step B, diagnosing the problem. It is important to dig beneath the symptoms and to identify the underlying causes -- for example, the way in which many juvenile behavioral problems apparently trace back to difficulties in the family.

In identifying the causes, it's important to distinguish between those which one can and cannot do something about. Some sources of rural injustice can be tackled right away. Others require legislative actions. Still other obstacles can't be alleviated until another generation is educated and basic changes in human attitudes have taken place.

Step C, identifying the viable alternatives and predicting their outcomes. What is relevant is predicting program performances and human responses that are actually likely to take place -- not what would happen ideally if everything went well. Many "slippages" can enter the picture at various points along the way of conceiving, gaining acceptance of, mobilizing, and completing a rural justice undertaking. At the same time, if one worries unduly about all that can go wrong, nothing would ever get started. As economist Albert Hirschman has pointed out, there often is a "hiding hand" effect whereby obstacles and setbacks stimulate fresh ideas and vigor that otherwise would never have appeared.[3]

In predicting responses to various proposed actions, it helps to view things through the eyes of organizations, the specific communities, or individuals being affected. If they are to be expected to respond in the intended way, three elements are necessary: 1) They need to have adequate knowledge about the proposed change. 2) They need to have financial, organizational, and legal capability to make the change. 3) They need to have adequate inducement,

[3]See Albert O. Hirschman, Development Projects Observed (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1967), especially Chapter 1.

in the form of either positive incentives or negative penalties. Where a law or regulation is involved, often it is not the severity of the penalty that matters so much as the uncertainty of its being enforced.

Step D, making the choices. Depending on the circumstances, review of a rural justice problem, its causes, and the remedial possibilities can have several outcomes:

1. One can do nothing and wait for more opportune circumstances.
2. One can defer the decision until better information is at hand.
3. One can select a single alternative and proceed with that.
4. One can establish priorities, and move ahead in sequence as time and funds become available.
5. One can select a combination of actions that either a) complement one another and enhance total performance or b) diversify efforts and reduce the odds of everything going wrong.

In arriving at such choices, any of several decision "models" may be most appropriate for pulling together and assessing the relevant information. (See Table 1.)

Finally, a word about how the underlying task environment can temper the use of resources in planning and implementing rural justice undertakings.

Sometimes the mood of a locality, a state, or the nation as a whole can affect how and when it's best to do things. For example, we in the U.S. seem to be going through a "conservative" cycle, in which there is pressure to reduce government spending, come down harder on deviant behavior, and worry less about the disadvantaged. However, some observers predict that this will reverse itself at least a bit and that by the mid-1980's there will be a more "liberal" mood. If so, this implies that it may be expedient for "social reformers" lie low for a while -- to tackle changes in more incremental fashion

Table 1. Some Decision Models That Can Be Applied To Rural Justice Undertakings

Decision model	Example
Maximizing achievement of a dominant objective, within the bounds of certain constraints. (Benefit-cost analysis can be a useful decision aid where long term choices are involved.)	Providing as many rural families as possible with convenient access to mental health services, without raising local taxes very much.
Minimizing the cost or negative consequences of achieving a certain level of performance.	Finding the least-cost way of providing people in remote places with emergency medical services.
Weighing the trade-offs between two or more competing objectives. (The choice depends on value judgments about how heavily to weight each objective.)	Deciding whether to centralize regional probation counseling services. Basing the counselors in one central place may be more cost-efficient, and make it easier to attract good professionals, but result in less understanding of local situations.
Minimizing the risk of failure. (There are various models for decision-making under uncertainty that one can turn to.)	Sometimes the dilemma of a new program which still needs to gain public acceptance and regular budget support. Possible answers include diversifying activities, avoiding high-risk or irreversible options, and trying things out on a small-scale pilot basis first.
Minimizing the consequences of active opposition. (Here one can usefully draw upon the "game theory" concepts used by military and business strategists.)	Possible need of advocates of juvenile justice reform and deinstitutionalization to take into account the counterreactions of those groups who resist such changes.
Satisficing -- doing enough to make reasonable progress, keep problems from getting worse, avert crises, and give balanced attention to the needs of various groups.	Sometimes this is about all an overburdened, multifaceted human services agency or law enforcement system can hope to do. Flexibility of response to special needs may be an important ingredient here.

as opportunities open up...to concentrate on improved public understanding of the problems and remedies...to develop and test fresh ideas that might be employed on a wider scale when the mood is right.

A second example of why it is important to take the task environment into account has to do with the characteristics of nonmetropolitan localities these days. Some rural communities continue to be very traditional -- composed mostly of families and leaders who have been there a long time...homogeneous in that most are in farming or mining and have similar ethnic background... relatively little contact with urban people...and perhaps reluctance to accept outsiders or new ideas unless they are strongly endorsed by local leaders. Other communities have experienced important changes, have had urbanizing influences, and are more heterogeneous and less cohesive than in the past. Here in East Tennessee, one finds in many counties a diverse mixture of farmers, family members who work in nearby towns, urban professionals who have sought the good country life, and retired persons who have returned or migrated from other places. Tourism and recreational attractions are dominant elements in some counties. Still other counties -- those near growing metropolitan centers -- consist mostly of bedroom communities inhabited by new arrivals who have few links to one another and who take little interest in community affairs unless their own kids or subdivisions are directly affected. These differences among localities carry implications for rural justice undertakings -- the problems that need priority attention, the best way to generate public understanding and acceptance of new proposals, the pace at which to move ahead, the funding potentials, and the extent to which local leadership and volunteer help can be utilized.

My third example of how the task environment affects things relates to underlying ideologies, values, ethics, and concepts of justice. Some societies

have accepted processes of reform which greatly curb individual freedoms and which deal with certain groups harshly. Other societies (probably the U.S. included) have placed great emphasis on not taking away freedoms or economic advantages already gained -- e.g., the reluctance of many communities to impose strict zoning or to expropriate land without compensating the owners well. The processes of urbanization and industrialization which are affecting many of our rural areas make it important that we take a fresh look at these underlying values and ideologies. There will be more disagreement between one group and another about how best to use scarce land areas. Increasingly, what one person does may have adverse effects on others -- e.g., water pollution below a strip mining area, or the traffic congestion created by unrestrained commercial development along a highway. (These are what economists call "externalities.") In the future, we shall probably have give up certain rights and freedoms in order to retain some others. Which to freedoms to sacrifice and which to protect is likely to be at the heart of many issues and decisions in decades to come.

IV. In Conclusion....

The notions that I've laid out here may seem a bit textbookish and basic. Of course in real life programs don't evolve that neatly and there may not be time to do much diagnosis. Also, allocating scarce resources among competing alternatives is not the only consideration when tackling rural problems. Other diagnostic perspectives are equally important. For instance, sociology provides key insights about legitimizing new ideas, diffusing information, organizing communities, and motivating people. The field of "institution building" calls attention to the internal characteristics and external linkages that are especially important if new undertakings are to become self-sustaining. From

law and political science we can acquire valuable insights about pre- and post-legislative processes.

Nonetheless, taking time out to examine what we're doing from the viewpoint of economic realities and resource-use effectiveness carries implications for persons in a variety of roles:

** For legislators, these economic decisionmaking considerations suggest the danger of overprescribing standards, funding formulas, and methods of approach. At least some flexibility to meet diverse local situations and changes over time is needed.

** For administrators, wise decisions will not come about unless they encourage grassroots feedback about problems, resource constraints, and likely impacts on specific groups.

** For advisory board members and advocacy groups, this economic view highlights needs to pinpoint problems and causes in specific terms, to offer viable solutions and not just be against everything, and not to become wedded to a particular course of action.

** For the individual program worker or volunteer, these concepts are useful to bear in mind when mapping out day-to-day activities. Better decisions about how to use one's own time and effort can add up to a lot!

** For professional analysts, the resource-allocation perspective shows the need for better concepts, facts, and methodology to help diagnose rural justice problems, identify possibilities, and assess future outcomes. Mere description of what has happened in the past will not do the job.

One could in a presentation like this call attention to refinements of economic theory (e.g., the field of "welfare economics") and quantitative techniques (e.g., linear programming) that could be used. But no amount of analytical sophistication and research funding will help very much if orderly decisionmaking approaches are not an integral part of every-day thought. What it all boils down to is three basic questions that all of us need to keep in mind as we leave this conference:

1) Does the proposal really get at the problem, and is it workable?

2) Will it have the purported effects?

3) Is it the best way?

The Economics of Concern and Compassion

Dave Brown
June 22, 1979

SOME QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What important decisions related to the programs you're working with does this presentation bring to mind?

2. In the circles that you have contact with, is there need for improvement in the processes of identifying and diagnosing problems, assessing alternatives, and arriving at decisions?

3. What specific criteria or considerations are most important in your particular situation when making program decisions?

4. Does the kind of problem-solving, decision-making framework laid out here fit? Can you suggest a more workable framework that might be useful to persons taking part in this session?

5. When there is disagreement, have you discovered some useful "tricks" for helping groups to arrive at consensus in effective manner?

6. When making program decisions, what kinds of information seem to be most seriously lacking? Are these information gaps the sort of knowledge that university researchers and graduate students could appropriately study?

7. Would it be useful for some universities or in-service training groups to develop materials of the sort presented here for use in courses, workshops, etc.?